



Frequently asked questions about the Botanic Garden's Strategic Plan

1. What is the difference between a park and a Botanic Garden?
 - a. While a park is a recreational area with picnic grounds and playing fields, a Botanic Garden is a living horticulture collection, used for education, conservation and display.
2. What is a Strategic Plan and why does the Botanic Garden need one?
 - a. A Strategic Plan helps organizations develop a direction that best uses its resources and promotes growth.
 - b. The Garden currently has \$1.5 million in yearly unmet operational needs, and is at least \$15 million behind in capital repairs.
3. What has led to the needs described in the strategic plan?
 - a. Opened in 1935, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden is the oldest Botanic Garden in Texas. Every year the buildings and infrastructure get older and require more effort to upkeep.
 - b. This is the first time a comprehensive study of the Botanic Garden has done. This plan revealed the true scope of these issues for the first time.
4. Who was involved in the Strategic Plan?
 - a. Three public meetings were held to gather the input from the citizens of Fort Worth. The leadership from: Botanic Garden, Park and Recreation Department and city administration, Fort Worth Botanical Society, Fort Worth Garden Club, Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), and Texas Garden Clubs, all met with the consulting group. Web comments and emails from the public (who could not make the meetings) were also taken into consideration.
 - b. Comments were received from the Park and Recreation Advisory board during meetings in May and July. An informal report was submitted in May to City Council and further Council comments will be received on September 20.
5. What does the Strategic Plan include?

- a. All operations in the Botanic Gardens are reviewed and compared to operations in similar botanic gardens nationwide.
 - b. Garden budget and finances are studied.
 - c. Review of the 2010 Master Plan and deciding what the first steps are in implementing it.
6. What are the goals developed from the Strategic Plan?
- a. Transform the guest experience.
 - b. Expand public programs.
 - c. Implement key parts of the master plan.
 - d. Repair, renovate and improve gardens, features and facilities.
 - e. Reorganize support groups and increase private support.
7. How was the strategic plan funded?
- a. This was an equal collaboration between the Botanical Society, Garden Club and the City of Fort Worth.
8. Where does the money for the Botanic Garden come from now?
- a. With the current budget of \$4.4 million, 58% is provided by the city, 39% from support groups (earned through rentals, admission to Japanese Garden and Conservatory etc.), and 3% is donated.
9. How does that compare to other botanic gardens?



10. What are the options to pay for unfunded operating needs?

The City has a duty to the taxpayer to ensure the best possible service at the least possible cost. The following are some of the approaches that were considered during the Strategic Planning process.

- a. Increase city support.
 - i. The city already generously provides 2/3 of the budget.
 - ii. Would not diversify income.
 - iii. Membership numbers and donations are not likely to increase.
 - iv. Having the city focus on infrastructure needs would better support the Garden.
- b. Increase contributions (memberships/donations).
 - i. Would not bring in enough funds to meet all of the Garden's needs.
 - 1. A General admission fee is needed to create a foundation for memberships and donations.
- c. Parking Fee
 - i. Would cut down on "freeloading" parking.
 - ii. Would be hard for people visiting BRIT, Texas Garden Clubs, The Gardens Restaurant, and Treasure Tree Gift Shop.
 - iii. Unlikely to bring in enough revenue.
 - iv. Not very effective at greeting visitors.
- d. Replace current feature based admission fee (Japanese Garden & Conservatory) with general admission for the entire Botanic Garden.
 - i. Admission will include access to the Japanese Garden and Conservatory.
 - ii. All other major botanic gardens in the nation have general admission or parking fees.
 - iii. Would fill the \$1.5 million in unmet operational needs.
 - iv. Diversifies income and sustainability.
 - v. Provides a platform of incentives for membership and donations.
 - vi. Would reduce damage caused by recreational activities (balls, kites, Frisbees, picnics).
 - 1. Trinity Park across the street will continue to be free and provide a space for these kinds of activities.

11. If adopted, where would the admission money go?

- a. All of the money would stay in the Garden. In addition to meeting current and unmet needs it will provide collaborative programs with local schools, and develop more interactive programs for visitors.

12. What about people on fixed or small incomes, how will they be able to enjoy the Garden?
 - a. A list of options is being developed for what will work best for the people of Fort Worth. These will be discussed with the community if the decision is made to have a general admission rather than a featured based admission.
13. When would the Garden begin charging admission?
 - a. If it does happen, the earliest it would start is fiscal year 2018.
 - b. This will be a policy decision for the City Council no sooner than the FY2018 budget preparation and possibly much later than that.
14. What will happen to the Garden if things continue as they are?
 - a. The Botanic Garden cannot continue on this path. Without significant changes in how the Garden is funded, it will continue to decline and cannot be guaranteed to exist for future generations.
15. What can the citizens of Fort Worth do to help the Botanic Garden now?
 - a. Support the acceptance of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Strategic Plan.
 - b. Become a member. Becoming a member has some great benefits including discounts on educational programs, and admission to the Japanese Garden and Conservatory.
 - c. Volunteer. The Garden loves its volunteers. They help with gardening projects and events.
 - d. Donate. All donations are greatly appreciated and go 100% into the Garden.

Updated: 10/6/2016 11:56 AM